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Warring Algerians responding to Gospel

ALGIERS, Algeria (BP) — Church groups are sprouting and spreading in Algeria as Berber tribesmen respond to the gospel, despite seven years of civil war that has killed as many as 100,000 people in the North African country.

The new congregations may be one of the first signs of a church-planting movement that Southern Baptists pray will spread throughout North Africa and the Middle East.

The region is home to many "Last Frontier" people groups with little or no access to the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

News of the church growth came from an elated Southern Baptist worker who spent a week visiting churches and leaders in Algeria. "Sam" (not his real name) cannot be identified for security reasons.

The Berber people group numbers 25 million across several North African countries, including Algeria. Christian workers began seeing church growth among Algerian Berbers during the early 1990s, before the nation sank into an ugly civil war in 1992.

Tens of thousands of people, including women and children, have been shot or hacked to death in the conflict, but the new churches have moved forward in outreach despite living amid the daily horrors of war.

Sam described one service during 1998 in which gunshots rang out and tear gas, smoke

and screams filled the streets around a church meeting place.

ing his visit. "To have worked for years to get the Gospel for this

have been working closely with Algerian believers and other Christian sending agencies to make the gospel more available to isolated Algerians.

Vast quantities of Gospel tracts, copies of the "Jesus" film, and Bibles have been distributed to many thousands of Algerians when they travel into Europe each year. Radio programs in the Berber language also have been steadily sharing the gospel for years.

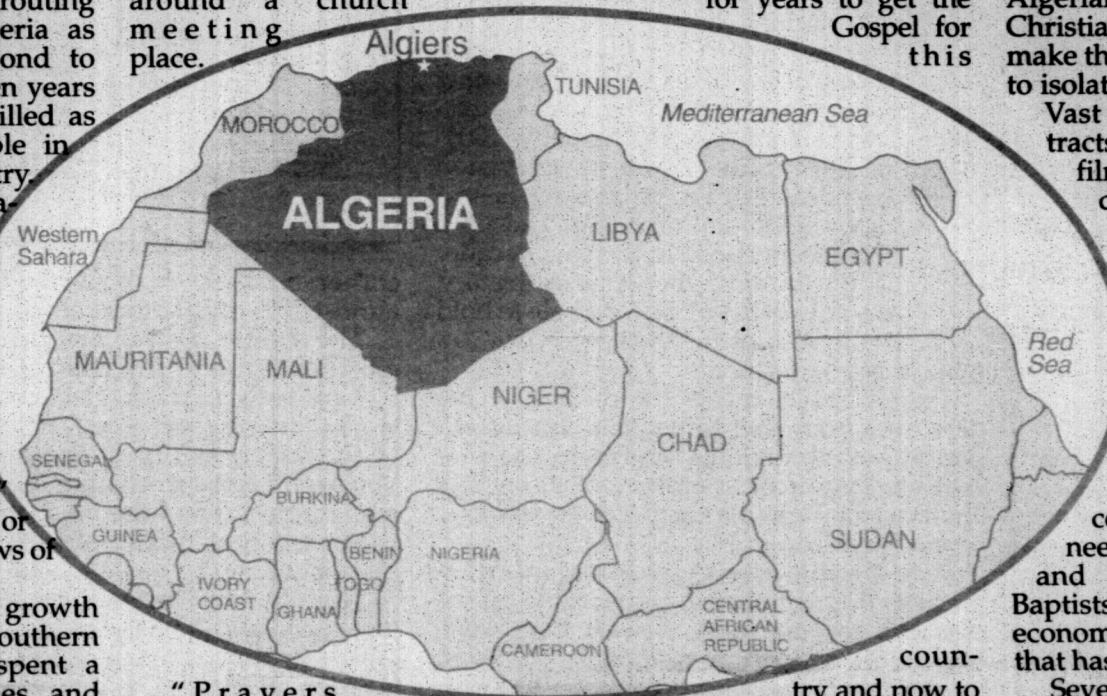
Bible translation continues to be a major need within the country, and Sam asked Southern Baptists to pray for the dire economic situation in Algeria that has left millions in poverty.

Seven years of war have driven a poor country even deeper into poverty. There is a severe housing shortage. Christians suffer from these conditions just like their countrymen.

Sam hopes that if the country can move toward democracy there will be more freedom for churches to share the gospel and reach out.

Southern Baptists have prayed and given money through their International Mission Board for exactly the church growth results Sam described.

He pleaded for his denomination to continue praying more than ever in coming months as Algeria lurches toward an uncertain future.



"Prayers

were sent up to heaven to the Lord, asking him that no one would be either shot or have their throat slit on that day," he said.

Today murders continue to occur weekly, but the pace has abated in recent months as the country prepared for national elections. Sam told of risky travel during his visit. He passed through one checkpoint manned by police where two soldiers were killed earlier by Muslim terrorists. "The violence is continuing. It is still a dangerous place," he said.

Sam declined to dwell on the nation's bloody strife, preferring instead to talk of the joy he experienced when he baptized 10 new believers in a bathtub dur-

country and now to be baptizing people ...," his voice trailed off in emotion.

"The larger churches are having baptisms almost every week," he declared.

Sam visited several churches which have grown steadily since he last visited before the war began. He also told of a growing network of house churches that promise another facet of growth.

Sam declined to give details, numbers or locations of the budding churches for security reasons. While evangelical believers appear to have avoided most of the war's bloodshed, more than a dozen Roman Catholic priests and nuns have been killed, he said.

Sam said Southern Baptists

Texas court sides with church

HOUSTON (ABP) — Citing a federal law enacted last year to protect charitable gifts, a Texas appeals court ruled Feb. 4 that a Baytown Baptist congregation does not have to relinquish tithes contributed by a member who later filed for bankruptcy.

The ruling by the 14th Court of Appeals reversed a 1997 trial court order that Cedar Bayou Church must turn over to a creditor four years of tithes given by church member Leland Collins.

Cedar Bayou pastor Richard Steel said Collins' gifts to the church were part of a long-term giving pattern and not an attempt to shift funds away from a creditor.

"He's been a tithing member of Cedar Bayou Church for more than 40 years," Steel said.

Steel said the church has incurred expenses of more than \$30,000 in defending and appealing the lawsuit but that most of that has been paid by designated gifts from within and outside the congregation.

Looking back

10 years ago

William W. "Bill" Causey, pastor of Parkway Church, Jackson, is unanimously elected executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at a special called board meeting. Causey replaces Earl Kelly, who retires in August after nearly 16 years as state executive.

20 years ago

The call goes out for volunteers to help with clean-up operations after the Pearl River flood in Jackson. The Mississippi Baptist Disaster Relief Unit is preparing thousands of meals from the parking lot of Colonial Heights Church, who had over one third of its membership flooded out.

50 years ago

Four members of a six-member team of Southern Seminary students chosen to lead a youth revival in Louisville, Ky., are Mississippians: David Byrd, Joe Canzoneri, and Leonard Holloway, all of Clinton; and Betty Jane Hammett of New Augusta.

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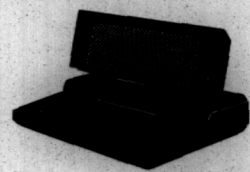
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Sending a powerful consumer message

After years of shrugging off declining ratings and soaring costs, network television executives are finally conceding the obvious: Business won't get better without a radical overhaul.

So begins an article by Kyle Pope entitled, "Tuning In to Hard Truths," in the April 19 issue of The Wall Street Journal.

Excuse me, but can it be that these highly-paid, swim-with-the-sharks network television executives have at long last come to the same conclusion as most of the American viewing public over the past ten years?

"The game as it was played before doesn't work," CBS Television president Leslie Moonves says in the article. NBC president Bob Wright also weighs in: "There's a growing acceptance by everybody that the business model just doesn't make any sense anymore."

A ratings chart accompanying the article betrays the trend to which these network execs are just now waking up. In the '50s, network television commanded virtually 100% of the entire scope of television broadcasting. From there, it's been a downhill slide that has picked up a significant speed in the past decade.

By the time the '90's are history, the networks will be fortunate to hold on to 25% of the viewing public —

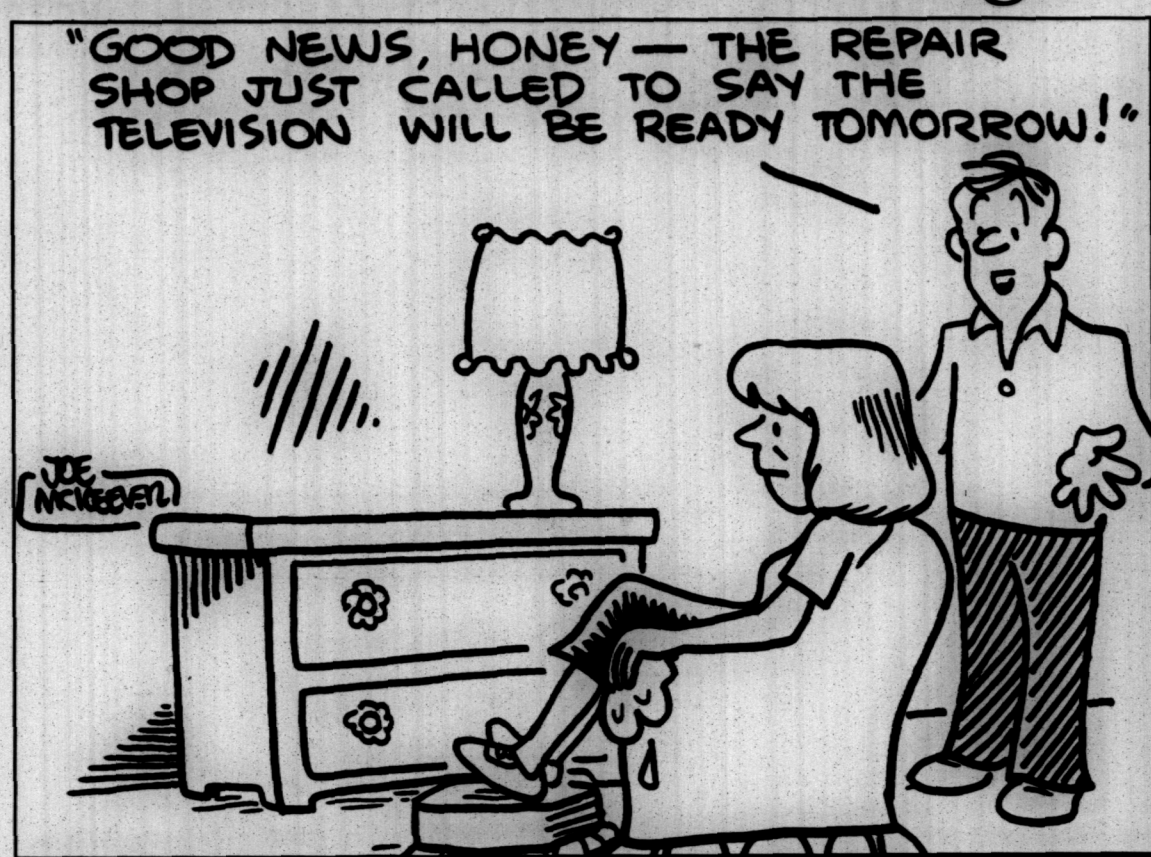
make that *very* fortunate.

Pope's article tracks the decline of the networks from their days as a "smug oligopoly" with enviable profits to the present-day cutthroat competition with other entertainment media for the eyes and ears of the American public.

One prominent research organization predicts that within two years, cable television will capture more viewers than ABC, NBC, CBS, and Fox combined.

As cable subscriptions continue to grow, digital satellite receiving systems drop below \$150, video/DVD sales soar, and ever-increasing numbers of Americans turn to the Internet for information and entertainment, the networks are indeed in big trouble.

Granted, network television is an enormously complicated undertaking, but a simple first-year business school question begs to be asked: How could an enterprise that not too long ago had an absolute 100%



corner on their market, wind up losing almost 75% of that market to competitors?

The simple answer that begs to be stated: They forgot their customers.

Tune in to network television — any networks, any nights — and note the content of the vast majority of the programming. You won't have to change the channel too many times to find the most obscene topics presented in a matter-of-fact, "everybody does it" context.

Nightly fare for one recent excursion into network television included witchcraft, urination, defecation, flatulence, murder, polygamy, homosexuality, transsexuality, animal copulation, prison rape, date rape, adultery, fornication, sodomy, pornography, voyeurism, sadomasochism, illegal drug use, sexual seduction of children, Christians as overbearing zealots, misogyny (too many incidents to count), and alcoholic overindulgence.

A person with any common decency would want to go take a bath after reading that list. Yet that's what network television

programmers believe the American public is clamoring to watch as entertainment, night after night.

Sure, network television is not the only culprit in the destruction of our culture. Books, magazines, cable TV, videos, movies, and the Internet also spew the same vile sewage into our homes, but none can match network television for market penetration. Research indicates that even 98% of Americans listed as living in poverty have one or more color televisions in their homes.

Maybe the people who run the networks are finally getting the message that we don't want to be fed the steady diet of human perversion they are offering as a product.

Maybe they will decide to come down from their suites in the skyscrapers of New York and Los Angeles and seek to understand what people really want to see on network television.

Maybe. Until then, there's a powerful consumer message we can continue to send them. It's the switch on your remote control marked, "Off." Use it.

Sir Robert Watson-Watt popularized radar as a device to monitor the speed of vehicles. Much to his chagrin several years later, he was arrested for speeding after being timed by a radar device. He wrote a short verse to commemorate the occasion:

*Pity Sir Robert Watson-Watt,
Strange target of his radar plot;
And thus with others I could mention
A victim of his own invention.*

Have you noticed how often we get caught in our own traps? Sin weaves a web that eventually holds us captive. We become victims of our own inventions.

Novelist Ernest Hemingway believed the wages of sin were sweet. He was a brilliant and gifted writer. He boasted that what is immoral is what makes you feel bad afterward.

For many years he lived an exciting but licentious life. One magazine writer noted that if the wages of sin include death,

PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL



Holding on to the eternal answer

By Dean Register, president
Mississippi Baptist Convention

Hemingway had cheated death many times. He became a bearded legend, a great hunter, husband of four wives, and the winner of both Nobel and Pulitzer prizes.

"It looks like sin has paid off," the writer once exclaimed. Look closer, however.

In his later years Hemingway attempted suicide several times and occasionally babbled around speaking incoherently.

Finally, he did what he kept telling people he was going to do. He shot himself to death in his Idaho cabin on July 2, 1961.

Somewhere between the

trigger and his brain, Ernest Hemingway found that the wages of sin are real.

The Bible describes the pains God has taken to defeat sin and its wages. In spite of our rebellion and despite our depravity, God provided a solution through the cross of Christ.

Ever how common and familiar sin may become, it is never normal. Sin is a violation of God's purpose and resistance to God's plan. It is both deed and disposition, an overstepping of a boundary and a failure to reach a standard.

Sin is choosing our way

instead of God's way.

French scientist Blaise Pascal put the problem of human nature and sin into perspective when he wrote, "There is nothing on earth that does not show either the wretchedness of man or the mercy of God; either the weakness of man without God or the strength of man with God."

In the aftermath of the horrible evil that erupted last week at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., a stunning reminder arises regarding the corruption that breeds in the human heart and the only sufficient antidote provided through Jesus Christ.

Moral relativists seem to have swallowed their tongues and are unable to offer any substantive counsel for this latest crisis, but I'll hold on to the one sure absolute — the cross of Christ as the eternal answer of God to the problems of evil and the agony of sin.

Register is pastor of Temple Church, Hattiesburg.

Gambling commissioners reach initial agreements

WASHINGTON (BP) — Members of a national commission studying gambling recently expressed agreement on a number of restrictions it may recommend in its report in June.

The National Gambling Impact Study Commission, which has both gambling proponents and foes among its nine members, indicated support for several recommendations to discourage the expansion of the practice in the U.S.

Consensus on the proposals, which have not received final approval, was expressed during an important meeting of the panel's report subcommittee in Washington. Among the recommendations receiving support:

- ♦ A minimum age of 21 years should be set for participants in all forms of gambling.
- ♦ ATM and credit machines should be removed from the floors of casinos, although debit machines would still be permitted.
- ♦ Warnings of gambling's addictive potential should be

posted in all casinos and on all game equipment.

- ♦ State-operated lotteries should reduce their dependence on low-income players.

- ♦ States should discourage or prohibit convenience gambling, which includes lotteries, or place a moratorium on expansion.

- ♦ Lotteries should not include casino-style games.

- ♦ Separate regulatory agencies should be established for government-sponsored lotteries.

- ♦ Lotteries should contribute funding to programs for problem gamblers.

It also was confirmed that the commission plans to call for a ban on Internet gambling.

Kay Coles James, commission chairwoman, cautioned commissioners and observers at various points during the two-day meeting of the tentativeness of the proposals, once saying all recommendations were "still open, still debatable."

The full commission has two more meetings scheduled before its report is released June 18.

Other recommendations on which consensus failed to develop included:

- ♦ States should ban legal wagering on amateur sports.

- ♦ Severe limitations should be placed on in-house credit extensions by casinos.

- ♦ Paycheck cashing should be prohibited at casinos.

- ♦ All gambling establishments should have self-exclusion policies allowing problem gamblers to request they be barred from playing.

- ♦ Schools should include gambling in classroom discussions of addictive behaviors.

Joanna Franklin, executive vice president of the National Council on Problem Gambling, observed part of the proceedings and said she was "significantly encouraged."

"I've heard some of the commissioners saying things that prove to me they've done some homework and have been listening and investigating and reading ... even if the recommendations are not strong,

even if they're not exactly what we would like to see, even if they are ignored by Congress, [the] president, whomever, it's still brought attention to the problem," Franklin told BP.

The commissioners were united in their disappointment with the lack of response by casinos, especially Indian tribal casinos, to a questionnaire they were given by the panel.

About 600 commercial casinos received the survey and about 130 responded, including the top 25 money-makers, a commission staff member said.

Of the more than 140 Indian tribal casinos solicited, about 12 had completed the questionnaire, the staffer said.



THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

Record

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Causey to lead 'Impact Northeast' project

COLUMBIA, Md. (ABP and local reports) — An initiative by several Baptist state conventions to evangelize in the Northeast U.S. has moved a step closer to reality with the selection of Bill Causey, former executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, as coordinator for the new "Impact Northeast" project.

Representatives of 11 state Baptist conventions voted unanimously to proceed with the partnership at a recent meeting at offices of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware in Columbia, Md.

Participants endorsed Causey and authorized him to name a coordinating council to help implement the ambitious state-led initiative.

Causey, who will continue to live in Clinton, chose executive directors of six state Baptist conventions to serve on the council. They are: Bill Pinson of Texas, Jim Futral of Mississippi, Reginald McDonough of Virginia, David Waltz of Pennsylvania/South Jersey, Ken Lyle of New England, and Charles Barnes of Maryland/Delaware.

Representatives from Alabama, Tennessee, District of Columbia, North Carolina, and New York also attended the March 29 meeting. Other states may join the initiative later, Causey said.

Leaders said Impact Northeast will concentrate on four priorities set at an earlier meeting — new church starts, reaching college and university students including internationals, leadership training, and church growth.

Larger state conventions from the South will focus resources and volunteers in partnership with Baptists in the smaller Northeast conventions, Impact Northeast leaders said.



Causey

The Virginia and Mississippi conventions have already appropriated more than \$100,000 each for use by Impact Northeast.

Leaders of the Northeast bodies emphasized they want to give as well as receive.

"Northeast Baptists want to share freely with Baptists of the South," said Barnes, whose convention will provide an office and clerical support for Impact Northeast. "We have crossed racial and ethnic lines. We know how it feels to be a small minority in an overwhelming majority. We understand urbanization as do few people in the South."

The Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (NAMB) has traditionally played a major role in Southern Baptist missions in the Northeast.

More recently, additional support has come through one-on-one partnerships between older, established state Baptist conventions and weaker conventions in the Northeast.

However, the Northeast project is a state-led initiative. State leaders emphasized it will not compete with NAMB and is not motivated by any ill will against the Southern Baptist missions agency. Instead, they said, the new program would seek to fill in the gaps and provide resources in areas that are beyond NAMB's focus.

State leaders said they want to "create new missions networks, expand opportunities for missions service and enhance existing mission resources" to reach millions of Americans

who have not accepted Jesus Christ.

Two NAMB representatives attended the meeting as observers and expressed their willingness to cooperate wherever possible. Additionally, Woman's Missionary Union in Birmingham, Ala., will transfer a staff member, Associate Executive Director Bobbie Patterson, to the office of WMU of Virginia in Richmond on special assignment to work with Impact Northeast.

Causey summed up a recurring theme of the meeting:

"This is not a state-to-state partnership in the traditional sense," he said, "but a new regional paradigm aimed at marshalling cooperative resources to bring as many people as possible to Jesus Christ."

MBREA officers elected



Officers of the Mississippi Baptist Religious Educators Association (MBREA) gathered at the Baptist Building in Jackson recently to plan events for the 1999-2000 year. The officers are (from left) Alan Wilson, children's minister at First Church, Olive Branch - second vice president; Mike McCool, minister of education at Ridgcrest Church, Madison - first vice president; Michael Johnson, professor in the department of Christian studies and philosophy at Mississippi College, Clinton - president; Ben Atkinson, minister of education at First Church, Vicksburg - president-elect; David Rodgers, minister of education at Main Street Church, Hattiesburg - secretary/treasurer. MBREA's fall meeting will be held on Oct. 25 at Ridgcrest Church, Madison. For more information on MBREA, contact Johnson at (601) 925-3296. (Photo by Carl M. White)

Miss. missionary on front line in Albania

TIRANA, Albania (BP and local reports) — Mississippian Dwayne Doyle is among the missionaries Southern Baptists sent into Albania April 9 as part of a task force to help cope with the flood of Kosovo refugees that swells literally by the hour.



FEEDING THE HUNGRY — Journeyman missionary Dwayne Doyle (right), a member of Puckett Church, Puckett, scoops sugar into bags at a food distribution warehouse in Tirana, Albania. Doyle was serving in Sarajevo, Bosnia, but is now part of a special task force of Southern Baptists missionaries working with the Kosovo refugees in Albania. (Photo courtesy of International Mission Board and Grace Robinette.)

Doyle, 28, a journeyman missionary and member of Puckett Church, Puckett, is one of nine Southern Baptist missionaries ministering amid the Kosovo refugee crisis.

Doyle and the others have helped set up a warehouse where food and other supplies are being prepared for distribution through

the churches across Albania. Plans call for preparing between 1,000 and 2,000 boxes a week. Four types of boxes are being shared: food, cleaning materials, hygienic supplies for women, and supplies for babies.

Some 1,000 people are being fed weekly through a Baptist church in Lezhe, in addition to distribution in the Tirana area.

A husky man with football player physique, Doyle has been working long hours preparing boxes in the warehouse and trudging through Tirana's muddy, busy streets seeking supplies to buy from street vendors.

Doyle had been serving in Sarajevo, Bosnia, since August 1997; his two-year journeyman missionary term will be completed in June this year. He and six other missionaries went to Albania April 9 to begin ministry amid one of the greatest movements of humanity in Europe since World War II.

For now, Sarajevo ministry is one of the war's casualties, he said. He and the others had lined up a long list of projects for short-term Southern Baptist volunteers from the United States to do, but the war has caused most groups to cancel their participation, he said.

Doyle's parents, Mississippians Alvin and Mary Doyle, are Southern Baptist missionaries serving in Nigeria. They will transfer to Slovakia this year.

Dwayne Doyle is now deciding whether career missions service overseas may be God's will for him.

On site for less than a week, the Southern Baptist workers already had rented a warehouse in central Tirana and

begun assembling packets of provisions that included flour, beans, sugar, salt, cooking oil, yeast, soap, onions, and potatoes. Each \$10 worth of supplies can feed a family of four for about a week.

They also are distributing blankets against the cold Albanian nights, mattresses, diapers, cleaning materials, coats, and clothes. The team had been able to buy food locally, which not only allowed them to fill orders immediately but also helped the sagging Albanian economy.

A wide range of evangelical Christians are working together to bring physical and spiritual relief to Muslim Kosovars and Albanians who need to hear the good news of God's love.

For now Southern Baptists are targeting Albanian families who have taken thousands of the Kosovo refugees — who also are ethnic Albanians — into their homes. One Baptist family has 22 people crowded into a two-story house on the outskirts of Tirana.

Baptists also sent four tons of supplies to Kukes, the key town in northern Albania where thousands of refugees pour in daily. Plans were being made to set up a distribution center in the coastal city of Lezhe, where a large congregation hopes to feed up to 1,000 refugees a week.

Most international aid programs, like the Red Cross, have directed relief efforts at the ever-growing refugee camps around Albania's borders. Baptist workers felt the needs of refugees living in private homes would largely go unmet.

Many of the refugees have escaped with little more than the clothes on their backs and will have no homes to go back to in the Kosovo area of Yugoslavia because homes have been torched by troops there.

The flood of refugees is particularly difficult to manage in Albania, Europe's poorest country. The collapse of pyramid-style investment schemes in 1997 brought financial ruin to many of Albania's 3 million people.

"In Albania, everybody wants to leave. They've given up on their country," confirms Jonathan Steeper, a Canadian Baptist who is general manager of the Baptist Foundation of Tirana. Steeper said he knew of one family earning only about \$100 a month that had saved \$5,000 in hopes of leaving.

The Southern Baptist missionaries in Tirana are working closely with the Baptist Foundation of Tirana, an organization uniting many Baptist organizations.

Southern Baptists also are cooperating with the Salvation Army, British Missionary Society, Dutch Christians, and other believers in the effort. Swedish Baptists sent 20 tons of baby food to help in the crisis, for example, and Hungarian Baptists also sent 20 tons of food.

Baptists are working with a group of small but growing evangelical churches to link physical aid with Christian witness. The Southern Baptist missionaries plan to turn over their warehouse operation to Albanian Christians as soon as possible.

"It is amazing to see churches come together as the body of Christ," said Dwayne Doyle. "This has been a wonderful witness to young believers."



LONG WAY FROM HOME — Bekim Beka, a Kosovar pastor in Tirana, Albania, carries Nazite Badallaj, an elderly Kosovar refugee, to a guard station at the Albanian border. The woman collapsed in no-man's land between Albania and Yugoslavia after Serb troops forced her to flee in her stocking feet. (Photo courtesy of International Mission Board and Grace Robinette.)

As of April 16, Southern Baptist churches and individuals had given \$95,746.79 for relief efforts among Kosovo refugees. Every penny donated is used solely for direct relief efforts.

Contributions may be sent to: Office of Finance, International Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

Updates on refugee ministry efforts are being posted under the "Front Page News" link on the International Mission Board's website: www.imb.org.

Tishomingo to host men's evang. conf.

A men's evangelism conference entitled, "And Every Man Stood" (Judges 7:21), is planned for May 7 beginning at 6 p.m. at Tishomingo Church, Tishomingo.

• The conference, sponsored by the Brotherhood of Tishomingo Church and Tishomingo Association, will feature Kara Blackard, pastor of Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth; and Randy Bostick, pastor of Oakland Church, Corinth. Music will be led by Gary Tesseneer, minister of music at Tishomingo Church.

A barbecue supper is included in the \$10 per person registration fee. The deadline for reservations is May 3, and reservations are limited. Fee can be mailed along with name, address, and telephone number to George Monroe, Tishomingo Baptist Church, P.O. Box 89, Tishomingo, MS 38873-0089. For more information on the conference, contact Royce Howie at (601) 438-8109, or Jim Pinkerton at (601) 438-7310.

So. Baptist membership sees first decline since '26

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — For the first time since 1926, membership in Southern Baptist churches registered a decrease in 1998. The decline of 162,158, or 1.02%, brings the new total to 15,729,356, according to figures from the 1998 Annual Church Profile.

While baptisms topped 400,000 for the second consecutive year, the 1998 total of 407,264 represents a decrease of 4,763 or 1.16% from the 1997 total of 412,027. The ratio of baptisms to total membership remained at 1:39.

Increases were registered in Sunday morning worship attendance, Sunday School enrollment, discipleship train-

ing enrollment/participation, music ministry enrollment/participation, Brotherhood enrollment/participation, and giving, while WMU enrollment decreased less than 1%.

The number of Southern Baptist churches showed a decline of 17 or .04%, bringing the new total to 40,870.

The Annual Church Profile is compiled by LifeWay Christian Resources from church reports routed through local Baptist associations and state conventions.

Sunday morning worship attendance increased by 3.33%, or 174,052, to 5,398,692 compared to the 1997 total of 5,224,640.

Sunday School enrollment increased by 7,832, or .1%, to

8,147,939 over the 1997 total of 8,140,107.

Discipleship training enrollment/participation increased for the third consecutive year with a gain of 103,823, or 4.27%, to a new total of 2,537,625. The 1998 total represents the highest enrollment for the program since 1966.

Music ministry enrollment/participation increased by 103,823, or 4.27%, to a 1998 total of 1,832,592, after a 1997 decrease.

Brotherhood enrollment/participation increased by 3,352, or .64%, after a 1997 decline, bringing the new total to 525,655.

WMU enrollment decreased by 4,666, or .47%, to 991,232,

marking the second year of decline after three years of increases.

Tithes, offerings and special gifts totaled \$6,888,796,898, an increase of 4.41% or \$291,185,556. Undesignated receipts for 1998 were \$5,421,234,605, an increase of 3.65%, or \$190,930,971. Total receipts were \$7,452,098,393, a gain of 5.35%, or \$378,179,553.

Totals in four categories — value of church property, church-type missions operated by churches, number of churches giving to associations on percentage basis and number of churches with ongoing intercessory prayer — represented decreases from 1997, but data was not reported by all states.

Beals already planning return to missions

By Wally Poor
International Mission Board

CARACAS, Venezuela — As they prepare to come home to Mississippi for furlough in Columbia, Richard Beal and his wife, Laurel native Martha, wind up one phase of their mission career and face a new challenge when they return to the field.

Before leaving Venezuela, the Beals are preparing others to take over a job they took "temporarily" a decade ago. Richard has served as treasurer and Martha, who grew up in Natchez, has served as bookkeeper for the Venezuelan Baptist missionaries.

The Beals will be on furlough through June of 2000 at the missionary home of First Church, Columbia.

When they return to the mission field, they will join with other missionaries and Venezuelan Baptist partners in a new challenge—reaching the more than 100,000 students in the Central University of Venezuela and other smaller colleges and universities in Caracas, Venezuela's capital city.

In a sense, the new assignment will almost close the circle on what Richard, a native of Pensacola, Fla., first came to do. When he and Martha arrived in the South American country after appointment, orientation, and language school, they were responding to a request from IMB missionaries for people to promote TEE (Theological Education by Extension).

"We're now beginning to feel the leadership of the Lord back into teaching. That's what I came to do in the first place," Richard says. "I hope to use my TEE background to train the leadership God will raise up in the cell groups and Bible study groups that we hope to establish."

"Martha does ESL (English as a Second Language). I can do conversational English. That will be a great way of reaching university students because they all need that," Richard says.

When the Beals arrived, they found that the job description they had responded to basically no longer existed. "We floundered around for the first eight months," Richard recalls. Then the Lord used a wise and respected Venezuelan pastor, Don German Nunez, to help the new missionaries find their niche in Venezuela.

The missionaries serving in Tachira, on the Venezuelan-Colombian border, had left. Don German, at the time head of the Venezuelan Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board, asked that the Beals be assigned there.

During that first term, they started a church in Urena, a city near Tachira.

For their second term of service, the Beals were asked by the Venezuelan mission to go to Maracay. They taught at the Bible Institute in Valencia and helped start two churches.

At the end of their second term, the Beals were forced to take a year and a half leave of absence to care for Martha's mother, who had Alzheimer's Disease.

When they returned to the field, Richard was invited to become the national director of Bible institutes. They

moved to Los Teques, where the Venezuelan Baptist Theological Seminary is located. He also directed some of the seminary's extension program and began to do some of the administration.

"Martha was bookkeeper, did home schooling and taught music. We did it all. We had a real full plate." When the mission treasurer left, the group turned to Richard to fill in "temporarily". That was 10 years ago.

"My joke is, 'Missionaries are like fertilizer. You spread them all around and God's work prospers. You lump them all here at the Mission office, they just smell,'" he said.

Richard and Martha Beal



A LEANING TOWER

One of the best known and most remarkable architectural structures in the world is the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Built in 1173, it is amazing that the tower has stood all these years as it continues to lean further and further away from perpendicular.

The Italian government has poured money and a great deal of time and energy into keeping it from toppling. It has not been easy. The problem with the tower is not the stones and the mortar. The problem is not in the flashing around the top, or the doors that lead inside. The problem is the foundation!

Following the most tragic school shooting in America last week in Colorado, I listened to commentators and experts give insightful solutions: take away guns; don't allow kids to wear trench coats or "funny clothes" to school; make teachers more sensitive so they'll notice when a kid is having a problem; put armed guards in the hallways; require the kids to take courses on how to deal with anger; hold the gun manufacturer responsible; prosecute parents for not watching over their kids more closely.

Surely all of these things were aspects of the horror that took place, but at the same time, we may not be addressing the most crucial issue.

Why do schools not have more security? It would probably be good if schools all across



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

our land had metal detectors and trained security units at every door, and if every teacher was knowledgeable, with a high degree of skillfulness, in anti-terrorism and hostage negotiations. While this is impractical and economically impossible, the biggest problem may be that it is not dealing with the problem. It would be the equivalent of re-roofing the leaning tower.

Why do teachers not do something? When teachers see a child is misbehaving, or acting inappropriately, or dressing unusual, why don't they do something? That's an interesting thought. Every day, in virtually every classroom, some kid is going to act, speak, or dress out of the norm — even "good kids" — so the question becomes, do what? Well, recommend the kid go to a counselor, or tell the parents they need to get the child help. If you are not aware of where this leads, just ask any classroom teacher what often happens when they notify a parent that their child is not behaving

properly. The potential reaction ranges from charges that the teacher picks on their son or daughter, to discrimination, to potential lawsuits as they defend their child. Besides that, a teacher, whose responsibility is to teach, may not have the time, energy, or expertise to follow up on 30-130 kids in their classrooms.

Still, that may not be addressing the problem, but might be the equivalent of arguing about the color or shape of stone used in the leaning tower.

Why don't parents keep up with what their kids are doing? That certainly is a valid issue and a parental responsibility, but anyone who has ever been a kid or has children knows that sometimes there are things youngsters conceal from mom and dad. Children see, hear, and even do things their parents never know. It is important for parents to be involved in the school life, social life, spiritual life, and home life of their children, but even if mom and dad are fulltime, "watching-over-their-shoulder" kind

of parents, it is virtually impossible to know exactly everything that is going on in a child's life, mind, and heart.

Ultimately, even developing wonderful parents who care for their children does not deal with the issue. It may be that trying to instill good family values would be the equivalent of fixing the doorways that lead into a leaning tower.

The Problem. What is the problem in Pisa, Italy — with their tower? **Foundation!** The foundation is not adequate to hold the tower as it continues to sink and lean, and it is expected to topple over, unless something happens. What is the foundation that needs help in our society? No doubt it is an oversimplification, but for the sake of discussion, it is: **Created by God, we have divine worth and eternal purpose and accountability before God.**

In our society, that is a low-priority emphasis and the foundation sinks. Even when that truth is emphasized, every individual is faced with receiving or rejecting the plan of God.

In the very first family a son named Cain rejected God and turned to kill his brother. It was a senseless, pointless murder by a boy who came from a fairly good home, in a good part of the country, with every opportunity before him.

God's foundation stands strong and true if we build our lives on Jesus.

Gary Smalley to speak at luncheon

A Gary Smalley Leader Luncheon sponsored by First Church, Jackson, and the Discipleship/Family Ministry (DFM) Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, will be held from noon to 1 p.m. on May 11 in Fellowship Hall West at First Church, Jackson.

The free luncheon is for pastors, church staff, and key church leaders. To make required reservations for the meal, contact Ronnie Falvey or Lucy Chappell at (601) 949-1904. For more information on the luncheon, contact DFM consultant Glenn Shows at (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

JUST FOR THE RECORD



Mission team from NWCC and First Church, Coldwater



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2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

The BSU at Northwest Mississippi Community College (NWCC), Senatobia, teamed up with First Church, Coldwater, for a spring break mission project to Kiev, Ukraine. The purpose of the trip was to assist in the renovation of buildings purchased by Kiev Christian University (KCU). The university is housed in part of a small rented building. The university has approximately 60 students currently enrolled, which 30 are commuters. The 30 remaining live in the cramped resident area of the school and they share one bathroom. The students enrolled in KCU are committed to remaining in Ukraine and planting churches among their own people. Pictured, front row, are John Sumner, retired BSU director at JCJC; Jessica Crenshaw, Coldwater; Julia (Ukraine); Allison Ormon, BSU; Rob Wier, BSU; Angela Ormon, BSU; Marina, Andrew, and Enya (Ukraine); back row, Frank Porter, BSU director NWCC; Roxie Porter, BSU; Ron Williams, Coldwater; Whitney Williams, Coldwater; Helen and Anatoli (Ukraine); Scot Jones, youth minister, Coldwater; Ann (Ukraine); and Nancy Nicholson, BSU.

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Hebron Church, Smithdale, honored J. Millard Purl and wife Velma with a special service and lunch on March 21 for his 21 years as pastor. This day of recognition was also to honor him for having served in the ministry for 51 years.

God For Us, a worship experience for all seasons, will be presented by a mass choir from Delta area churches, May 2, 7 p.m., at the Bologna Performing Arts Center in Cleveland. For additional information call (601) 843-2701.

Lay Renewal will be held at Faith Church, Hickory Flat, April 30, May 1, and May 2. Coordinator for the weekend will be Greg Tanner of Osyka, who will be accompanied by his wife Susan. Youth leaders will be Jason and Amy Davis from Brandon and Donald and Betty Andrews from Ecru will lead the children's groups. W. G. Dowdy is pastor.

Church Bible Drills were held at Oakland Church, Walnut, on March 14. Pictured (back row) are Tim Ausburn and B.J. Griffith; (middle row) Ryan Winter, Elizabeth Reed, leader, and Chris Ray; (front row) Stephanie Ausburn and Amanda Norton.



Bible Drill participants, Oakland Church, Walnut



Oakland Church, Walnut, held its Acteen Recognition Services on March 14. Pictured are Kay Winter, WMU director; Belinda Bates and Melinda Bates, Queens; their mother, Deborah Bates; and Elizabeth Reed, Acteen leader.

HELP KOSOVO REFUGEES NOW!

"When I was hungry you fed me. When I was naked you clothed me."

Matthew 25:35-36

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COMMENDS CRITICISM

Editor:

I wish to commend you for your straightforward criticism of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee for their response to the motions from the Salt Lake City meeting requesting the 1999 national convention be held some place other than Orlando, Fla.

If a boycott of Disney was a correct action, then a rejection of Orlando as a site for the 1999 Convention would also be correct, in my opinion.

I have a strong conviction some of these sites are chosen because they are interesting and exciting places to visit. Many of the delegates are enjoying a vacation at someone else's expense.

The positive Christian action would be to reject this city and the perverse and sinful lifestyle it promotes and practices.

This decision by the Executive Committee does nothing to advance the cause of Christ.

Haskel Stringer
Bay Springs

JESUS IS THE ONLY WAY

Editor:

I am tired of people citing the do-not-judge Scriptures ("Muslims in heaven?" letter to the editor, April 1) to tell me I can't make a judgment.

Although the letter writer did not specifically refer to Matt. 7:1, it is the favorite. It has been used like the race card to silence people and to excuse any and every sin, but Jesus did not forbid the Christian from judging.

In Matt. 7:15, Jesus enjoins us to beware of false prophets.

There is no way to obey this without making an evaluation. In John 7:24 (NASV), Jesus said, "Judge not according to appearance but judge with righteous judgment." In 1 Cor. 5:12-13, Paul admonished the church at Corinth for failing to judge the unrepentant sin of incest in the congregation.

I am aware that in some contexts the word judge means condemn, while in others it means to evaluate.

Because of who Jesus is and what he did, it can be stated on the basis of God's inerrant Word that those following Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, or any other person will not meet the criteria for entrance into heaven, be he King Hussein or whoever.

It is the inescapable responsibility of every Christian to speak that truth in love to those who are ignorant of it.

I am glad that the editor of The Baptist Record did not evade his responsibility, but spoke to this in his editorial on March 4.

Louise G. Shannon
Yazoo City

Editor:

Thank you for your excellent editorial in the March 4 issue of

The Baptist Record. I would not have otherwise known about President Clinton's eulogy of King Hussein.

I feel compelled to challenge the theology of those who believe our good works assure us a place in heaven.

I've spent over 46 years preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the very heart of that message are the words of Jesus in John 14:6 (NIV): "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

The Scriptures teach that we are judged first on the basis of what we have done with Jesus and then on the evidence of our works.

King Hussein, nor any other person, will be allowed into heaven if they have rejected the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

It is unfortunate that Bill Clinton knows more about the Koran than he does about God's plan of salvation. It is even more unfortunate that many other professed Christians do not know any more about the plan of salvation than he does.

Floyd F. Higginbotham
Bogue Chitto

PRAY FOR RIO

Editor:

We wanted to inform you of the upcoming city-wide crusade in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

On May 23, we will be receiving approximately 400 Americans from all over the U.S., to join hands with Brazilian Baptists to evangelize the State of Rio.

Great Commission Christians will be preaching, witnessing, and discipling in over 260 churches of the Carioca Baptist Convention.

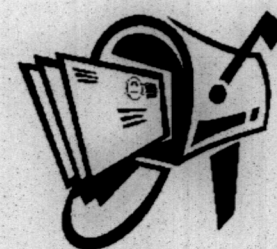
On May 29, we will have a victory service in Maracana, the largest open air soccer stadium in the world. Sammy Tippit will be preaching.

The Governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro will be making a plea to Rio residents to lay down their guns and pray for peace.

He believes that this can only begin if the Christians of Rio unite in prayer and support of the disarmament campaign.

We want Christians all over the world praying for this "God-Sized" victory. Thank you.

Elizabeth Oates, Sharon Fairchild, and Wendy Stout
IMB missionaries to Brazil



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Concord Church, Booneville, ordained Luke Ledbetter and Billy Tigrett as deacons on April 14. Pictured (from left) are Robert E. Walker, pastor; Ledbetter; Tigrett; and Bill McCreary, director of missions. Concord recently celebrated its 150th anniversary.



The Barnettts

Stanley Barnett and his wife Estelle were recently honored with a fellowship upon his resignation as interim pastor of Sardis Church, Philadelphia. They were presented a gift of appreciation. He is retiring after serving as pastor of churches in Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi for 50 years. He has served as interim pastor of five churches since his retirement.

Calvary Church, West Point, ordained Rob Smith as deacon on March 21. Pictured (from left) are Martin Steelmon, pastor, and Smith.



Steelmon and Smith

MINISTER WITH CHILDREN:

Second-Ponce de Leon (SPdL) Baptist Church of Atlanta, Georgia is seeking a Minister with Children. This person will serve as one of twelve Pastoral Staff team ministry equippers. SPdL is a 3,600 member congregation in north Atlanta drawing people from 108 zip codes throughout the metro region. Offering both traditional and contemporary approaches to worship, SPdL offers its members the choice to support missions and ministries through either the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Southern Baptist Convention and ordains women and men to the diaconate. Applicants should have a seminary degree, professional experience in Baptist congregational leadership with children's ministry, awareness of the contemporary challenges facing children and their families, and a desire to build a team of children's teachers & leaders. Resumes with references should be sent to: Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Minister with Children Search Committee, 2715 Peachtree Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30305.

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'On Mission Celebrations' slated for 2000

Homecomings

Damascus, Hazlehurst: May 2; 11 a.m.; dinner on the grounds; "Revelations" in afternoon singing; David Patterson, pastor.

Silver Creek, McComb: May 2; 11 a.m.; Harold Gartman, guest speaker; The Travelers in music, 1:30 p.m.; Pat Bourg, pastor.

Salem (Kemper): May 2; services, 10:45 a.m. with singing by the Gospel Reflections; dinner on the grounds at noon; Jerry Jones, pastor.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — The year 2000 will bring a new name and a new format to a familiar missions education experience in Southern Baptist churches and associations. The World Missions Conference (WMC) will become an On Mission Celebration (OMC), and the new format will offer more flexibility, customization, and creativity for the local planning team.

The On Mission Celebration, like its predecessor, is a partnership project between state conventions, national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), the International Mission Board (IMB), and North American Mission Board (NAMB). The first OMCs are planned for spring 2000.

The primary reason for the changes is to give a familiar program a "fresh, new look," said Kenny Rains, chair of the OMC administrative team and mission opportunities and events manager at NAMB.

"WMC has served us well for many years," Rains said, noting the program was introduced in 1968. "OMC launches us into a new millennium with a new way of plan-

ning, promoting, and conducting an association-sponsored or associational-wide missions experience."

OMC will include many of WMC components. It will highlight the work of missionaries; be planned and conducted through a local team; and seek to increase involvement in and support of missions.

The major differences center around the design of the event. For example, the maximum length of an OMC is four days, compared to the maximum eight-day format in a WMC. The planning tools also provide direction for planning an event that targets a certain group, such as young adults or children.

The elements of the OMC also have been broadened. While an OMC may include an associational kickoff event — a common element of WMC — an OMC may be built around a "kindness explosion." This event would involve missionaries and church members in community ministry projects that focus on performing kind deeds.

Leaders of Southern Baptists' national sponsoring entities affirmed the direction

of the On Mission Celebration.

NAMB president Bob Reccord said, "Every congregation needs to commit to become passionate advocates in resourcing every Christian in being on mission with God."

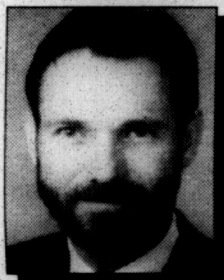
IMB president Jerry Rankin underscored the need for Southern Baptists to celebrate and be involved in God's activity in the world. "God is demonstrating his providence and power in unprecedented advancement toward fulfillment of the Great Commission," he said.

WMU executive director Dellanna O'Brien highlighted the overall missions experience that an On Mission Celebration will provide. Noting it will "bring the world to our doorsteps," she said that participation will "open the door to heartfelt experiences of missionaries who represent us to those places we may never go — places that need the gospel so desperately."

For more information, contact the OMC/WMC coordinator in your state convention office or contact Beth Bootz, OMC coordinator for NAMB, at (770) 410-6478; e-mail, onmissioncelebrations@namb.net.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

Healthplex Management, L.L.C., managing partner of the Baptist Healthplex at Mississippi College, has named David Carpenter as director of the fitness facility. Carpenter, who currently serves as director of the Baptist Fitness Center in Jackson, will now be managing both facilities.



Carpenter

Brandon resident, holds a bachelor's degree in Fitness Management from Mississippi State University.

RA Derby Day was held at First Church, Morton, on March 22. Pictured (from left) are Jay Robbins, Alan Coley, Zack Rogers, Jackson Rogers, Cole Lynch, Delayn Alford, Dillon Alford, Justin Nutt, Casey Coley; (second row) Andy Anderson, Ryan Parker, Eric Gatewood; (third row) Adam Gatewood won third place trophy; Kevin Gordon won second place trophy, Chris Gatewood, Joseph Sanders, and A. J. Woods won first place trophy. Alvin Doyle is RA leader and pastor.



RA Derby Day at First Church, Morton

Old Rice Road Church, Madison, will have dedication services for its new church facilities on May 2 at 2 p.m. A reception will follow the services.

East McComb Church and Central Church in Pike County teamed up for a RA Racer Rally. Participants pictured from left (first row) are Philip Wilson, Justin Anderson, Nathaniel Pruski, Zack Boyd, Marty



RAs of East McComb Church and Central Church

Tweatt, Jeremy Porter, Bradley Thornhill; (second row) Brent

Mercier, Dustin Moak, Michael Anderson, Zack Thornton, Michael Hart, Tyler King, and Matthew Causey.

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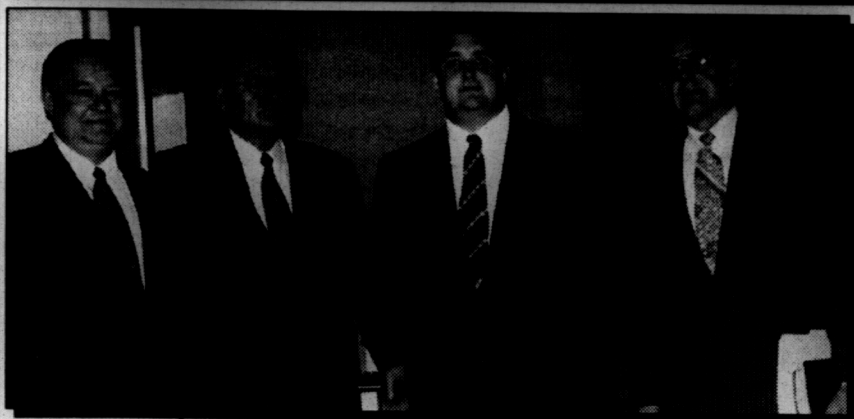
SARDIS LAKE BAPTIST CHURCH, 24709 HWY 35, Sardis, MS 38666, is in need of used 24-30 passenger bus in good condition. Contact youth committee at 601-578-0865 or 601-563-8517.

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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Jeremy Shane Crawford was ordained to the ministry at Siloam Church, Clay County, on Jan. 24. He was called to Siloam Church as minister of youth/education. Pictured (from left) are Maurice Pinkston, Peyton Myers, Crawford, and Bill Duncan, director of missions.

Liberty Church, Union County Association, licensed **Randle Scott Pilcher** to the ministry. He has served as Sunday School director, discipleship

director, and RA leader. He and his wife Amy have one son Jacob. Pictured (from left) are David Jordan, interim pastor, and Pilcher.



Jordan and Pilcher



The Martins

First Church, Grenada, recognized **Everette and Arma Glyn Martin** in its services, March 28, for their 50th wedding anniversary. In Mississippi, he served as pastor of churches in Derma, Cleveland, Ridgeland, and Gore Springs. He also served churches in Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and Arkansas.

John M. Purl Jr. was licensed to the gospel ministry by **Hebron Church, Smithdale**, on Feb. 28. He and his wife Amy are currently serving as missionaries in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, West Africa. His father, **J. Millard Purl**, pastor of Hebron Church for 21 years, was licensed to the gospel on Feb. 28, 1948, exactly 51 years ago from his son.

Scott E. Brown has been ordained as a deacon in **Rocky Creek Church, George Association**. **Jerry Mixon** (right), pastor, is pictured presenting Brown with a certificate of ordination.



Brown and Mixon

Marc Ginn was licensed to the ministry by **Easthaven Church, Brookhaven**, on March 28. Pictured (from left) are Marc Ginn and his father **Bendon Ginn**, pastor.



M. Ginn and B. Ginn

Revival dates

Bluff Springs, Magnolia: May 2-5; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; discipleship training, 6 p.m. and worship, 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; **John Gillis**, Ridgecrest, N. C., evangelist; **J. R. Walley**, Petal, music.

Ridgela Heights, Escatawpa: May 9-12; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; **Bruce Gill**, guest speaker; **Ronnie Cottingham**, music; **Steve Cirlot**, pastor.

Daniel Memorial (Metro): youth revival, May 13-16; **Byron Lee Malone**, Hattiesburg, guest speaker; **Daniel Praise Band**, music; **Allen Sims**, music/youth minister.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

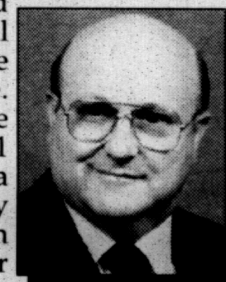
The Princeton Review has named the **Mississippi College School of Law**, founded in 1975, as one of the top ten law schools in the nation with regard to the quality of life of its students. The Princeton Review

conducted a survey of more than twenty thousand current law students at 170 American law schools. **Howard University**, **Brigham Young**, and **Baylor University** were also listed in the top ten.

Dying, the fall seminar, will be held Nov. 2-3. To register or for more information, call **Kristi Lee** in the Office of Continuing Education at (601) 925-3301 or E-mail at: continuing-ed@mc.edu.

126th annual session on May 2.

One hundred and four graduates will be awarded the bachelor's degree. The Baccalaureate service will be at 11 a.m. in the **Modena Lowrey Berry Auditorium** with **Kermit D. McGregor** delivering the sermon. The commencement address is scheduled for 3 p.m. with **Jim Futral** as featured speaker. **McGregor**, a native of Pontotoc County, is pastor of **First Church, Mendenhall**. He is a graduate of **Blue Mountain College** and **New Orleans Seminary**. He received honorary doctor of divinity degrees from **Blue Mountain College** and **William Carey College**. **Futral** presently serves as the executive director-treasurer of the **Mississippi Baptist Convention Board**. He is a graduate of **Clarke College** and **Blue Mountain College**. He received his master of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from **New Orleans Seminary**.



McGregor



Futral

MS POSITIONS AVAILABLE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, TERRY, MS is seeking a full-time Minister of Youth and Activities to develop and direct a comprehensive program of evangelism, discipleship, ministry, and education directed toward youth and their families. This person will also develop and direct a program of church activities and recreation that promotes evangelism, discipleship, ministry, and fellowship within the church and the community. This person will also have special emphasis to coordinate such activities for children and their families. Persons feeling God's leadership to such a ministry position may submit their resumes to the Personnel Committee, **First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 159, Terry, MS 39170**.

PART-TIME SECRETARY, hrs. 9-1 M-F. Call between hours of 9-11 M-F at (601) 992-9977.

SUMMER YOUTH MINISTER grades 7-12 would be responsible for summer activities, including youth camp and VBS, and assisting Minister of Education with children's activities. Contact **Penny McLemore**, Central Baptist Church, 2511 "C" Street, Meridian, MS 39301, 601-693-4288.

Mississippi College Office of Continuing Education with the Department of Social Work, Sociology and Family Studies and the Department of Psychology and Counseling is hosting a three-part seminar series on grief resolution entitled "Making a Difference." The spring seminar "Normalizing of Loss," was held on April 19-20. The summer seminar "Child and Adolescent Victims," will be held Aug. 11-12. This presentation will include the effects of traumatic events on children with special emphasis on illness, injury, and child sexual abuse. "Death and

William Carey College (WCC) Athletic Director Steve Knight has announced that the school will sponsor varsity men and women's golf teams beginning the fall of 1999. The golf program will be located on the **Hattiesburg campus** and will join men and women's basketball, baseball (men), and fast pitch softball (women) as the **Hattiesburg based sport offerings**. WCC sponsors men and women's soccer on the **Gulfport campus**.

Blue Mountain College, **Blue Mountain**, will hold commencement exercises for its



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Roy Honeycutt leaves hospital for home

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Nearly three weeks after open-heart surgery, former Southern Seminary President, Roy L. Honeycutt, left a Louisville, Ky., hospital April 19 and is recuperating at home.

"It was the prayers of our friends in Louisville and beyond that made the difference. I am convinced of that," said Honeycutt in a telephone interview April 20. "I would like to express my deep appreciation to the seminary family for their prayers." He also asked for continued prayers during the next several weeks of rehabilitation.

Honeycutt said he wanted to "thank the excellent medical team for their good service" in the way they took care of him.

"I'm feeling well," said an exuberant Honeycutt. "Of course, it's always good to be back home."

People wishing to write to the Honeycutts may send correspondence to their home at 2911 Lilac Way, Louisville, KY, 40206. Honeycutt, chancellor of Southern Seminary from 1993-97, was president of the institution from 1982-93.

Blackaby: In drought, pray for forgiveness

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — During the Texas drought last summer, noted author and speaker Henry Blackaby didn't pray for rain — he prayed for forgiveness.

"Is there anything in Texas that might cause God to withhold the rain to get the heart of his people to return to him, to seek his face in repentance and prayer and confessing of sin so that he could heal the land?" Blackaby recalled asking himself during one of the worst droughts in Texas history.

Blackaby, keynote speaker at Southwestern Seminary's Church Music Workshop Feb. 15-19, used his experience to remind workshop participants that God still uses natural events to get people's attention.

Referring to the seventh chapter of 2 Chronicles, when the Lord told Solomon that his people needed to humble themselves and pray because there was no rain, Blackaby asked the students, "Did you read this Scripture (last summer) and believe him?"

Blackaby said Christians should make the connection that God can find the same sin of pride in today's culture and can use the same means to bring people to repentance.

"My heart cry (during the drought) was that Texas Baptists will have made the connection because the healing of the land depends on it," Blackaby said.

Emphasizing the need to examine one's own heart and discover what God might be trying to show through a drought, he asked, "Did you cry

out for rain or for forgiveness?"

Blackaby made his remarks in a message on prayer, the last in a series of lectures on worship at the Fort Worth, Texas, seminary.

Tapping into the energy and power of God through prayer is a vital element in a Christian's life, he said.

Jesus patterned his life around prayer, Blackaby said, and Christians should do the same.

Blackaby reminded students of the story in the 19th chapter of Luke in which Jesus confronted the moneychangers in the temple who were defiling it.



Blackaby

Jesus' response was, "My house shall be a house of prayer," Blackaby said.

Noting Jesus tolerated many sins of the people, Blackaby said Jesus drew the line at defiling the temple.

"Jesus knew that the Father had established a house of prayer" and Jesus was trying to maintain it, Blackaby said.

"When Jesus said, 'My house is a house of prayer,' he meant the whole people of God should be immersed in prayer," Blackaby added.

Blackaby said Christians need to maintain their lives as houses of prayer, making prayer a vital part of every day.

"Prayer is more than just a prayer meeting on Wednesday

night," he said, adding that Christians' lives ought to be "saturated in prayer."

Neglecting prayer, Blackaby said, will result in God's judgment. "How serious is it in the mind of God for people not to be a people of prayer?" he asked. When Jesus went into the temple and saw people misusing it and corrupting it, "he knew why the judgment had come to God's people," Blackaby said.

Blackaby said not knowing how to pray or what to pray is not an excuse because God anticipates Christians' prayers.

"When the people of God go before God in prayer, the blessed Holy Spirit, fresh from the presence of the Father, comes to instruct us as to what we ought to pray," he said.

STAFF CHANGES

Ted Shepherd has retired as pastor of the Chinese Mission of First Church, Greenville, after 22 years of service. He and his wife Nan were honored with a reception, a resolution recognizing his years of service, and a love gift from the church and mission. Park Neff of Arcola was called as new pastor of the Chinese Mission. Neff is a member of First Church and received his master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary in 1995. He has done pulpit supply and interim work throughout the Delta area.

Silver Creek Church, McComb, has called **John Rushing** as minister of youth effective May 1.

Shady Grove Church, Panola County, has called **Terry Tribble** as pastor effective

March 21. He was previously pastor of Rome Church for 12 years.



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

LifeAnswers

A new friend just confided in me that her job includes sexual favors for her boss. The man's wife is in my WMU group. Should I tell his wife or just confront him?

You are a friend, not an informant. Informants usually get caught in the middle of the mess. Your job is to love your friends, including the wife in your WMU group.

Confronting the husband is another matter. It will be your second-hand evidence against his word, and you probably won't get too far.

Follow the instructions found in Matt. 18:15-17. You could tell your husband, pastor, or a leader in your church and two of you go to him in love and confront him. You could wait and allow his sin to find him out. You could encourage your friend to file charges against him.

Before taking any of these actions, pray for God's direction. Your friend likewise should be encouraged to pray for wisdom and seek God's leadership. She is the victim, and any action to correct this situation should really begin with her. Pray also for this man's wife and ask God to empower her with wisdom and understanding to see the truth about her husband — and her role in dealing with this matter.

Another school shooting! Each one gets worse. How can I convince my children this is a safe world? How can I give them security and peace?

Actually, this is not a safe world. Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33 NIV)

The security and peace you can pass on to your children is the fact that a loving Father in Heaven sent eternal salvation through his Son, Jesus Christ, and promised he will never leave us.

Help your children to make wise choices in their friends; teach them to look for proper characteristics in others, and encourage them by having their friends over to your house so that you can observe and instruct.

Keep the violence to a minimum that they watch on television and see in video games. By talking, communicating, laughing, playing, and praying with your children, you can help them deal with problems in proper ways rather than seeking revenge and hurting others.

This is a discipline that must be learned in the home. It then becomes contagious and serves as a Christian witness to others.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

Blackaby denies popular book teaches 'charismatic' views

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (ABP) — Southern Baptist author Henry Blackaby denies teachings in his book and Bible study "Experiencing God" are "charismatic," despite their popularity among Christians who claim that label.

The Southern Baptist-produced book and discipleship course have been used far and wide in Baptist churches and other evangelical and mainline denominations, including groups that consider themselves charismatic.

In fact, Todd Hunter, director of the Association of Vineyard Churches USA, said, "'Experiencing God' is advocating hearing from God in ways normally thought of as charismatic."

Not so, replied Blackaby, director of prayer, revival and spiritual awakening for the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board. "It was written in the direction of knowing and doing the will of God," Blackaby said. "I'm simply doing what Baptists have always done — talking about the Scriptures, letting the Holy Spirit guide us in obedience to him and knowing the abundance of life in him."

Hunter's comment is not the first time Blackaby's material has been called "charismatic." An article in the March issue of Charisma magazine implies that "Experiencing God" is a catalyst for a rise in charismatic Southern Baptist churches.

"That was a gross misrepresentation of 'Experiencing God,'" Blackaby said, adding that no one contacted him before publishing the story.

"I do not, have not and will not urge people to turn away from tradition," Blackaby said. "To me, tradition is what God has done in our midst. 'Experiencing God' does not urge people to abandon tradition but simply to return to the Scriptures and let the Spirit of the living God guide them, corporately and personally."

Blackaby said he now has "a personal walk with God," as he has all his life, "but that doesn't mean I'm charismatic in the modern term."

LIFE AND WORK

Through loneliness to loving presence

1 Samuel 22:1-5; Psalm 142:1-7

By Doug Bain

On contemplating marriage I heard a friend say, "Better lonely than miserable." If those are the choices, lonely could well be the lesser pain. Still, suffering from loneliness shapes the bitter experience of many a person.

Surely we would be surprised to learn how many people spend their nights and their days in the pain of isolation. We would be shocked to learn how insensitive most of us are to those who suffer in this way. Lonely people might even be too distressed to see how they may have buried up in their own loneliness rather than reaching out to others.

Reflectively we could speak of a "crowded loneliness," of an "alone loneliness," a "self imposed isolation" that comes from a lack of social skills, or even a "self imaged isolation" that regards oneself as unapproachable.

How can we cope with loneliness? How does it happen that we get so fragmented from those who are lonely? We can expect signals from Scripture on this issue suggesting that we can move beyond the bitterness of loneliness and that we can move toward those who are lonely. The biblical message of a reconciling God surely speaks to the experience of isolation.

Life can become lonely (1



Bain

Sam. 22:1-5). David repeatedly had to leave family and friends as he fled Saul's attacks on his life.

More than once (see also 1 Sam. 24) David found refuge in a cave. On both occasions he had the makings of an army with him. Even his compatriots could not replace the security context that home-folks provide.

If we can take Psalm 142 as being by David and if we can judge from the reference to a "cave" in the Psalm's title, then this experience in the cave of Adullam may be where David expressed reliance on God's presence as he coped with loneliness. Unsettling circumstances often bring feelings of fragmentation, especially when one is isolated from friends and family.

God hears the cry of the lonely (Ps. 142:1-3a). Even though this Psalmist will indicate that he is submerged in

desperate loneliness, yet he has not closed himself off from God. He is honest with God about how he really feels and expresses that before him. He experiences the pain of isolation but does not compound that pain by isolating himself from God. "I cry out, I lift my voice, I pour out, I tell, I am confident — even when my spirit faints." What an incredible model for handling our painful feelings!

God cares when no one else seems to care (Ps. 142:3b-7a). The Psalmist plaintively pours out his lonely heart to God, owning and fully feeling his painful feelings. He feels ambushed, undefended, ignored, and vulnerable, "no one cares for my life." Yet he still brings those real feelings into the presence of God (cf. Lam. 3:21 & Psalm 73:16).

Everything of which he felt deprived (3-4), he suggests in 5-6, the Lord bountifully supplies to his spirit. The Psalmist raises his eyes above the plane of his-

tory to glimpse provisions which indeed nurture his spirit. In the midst of loneliness God nurtures the wounded spirit, providing refuge from the sting of isolation. Part of what prayer can offer the lonely believer is being "set free from my prison!"

God can provide "community" (Ps. 142:7b). The Psalmist promised to praise God for that deliverance. He knew that he would be bearing this witness in the company of other believers and would not be alone to do so.

The believing community should provide contextuality, evidence, and visibility for God's supportive care. God can deliver his children from isolation through the supportive love by his people.

This is part of the church's mission: they "will gather about me," so as to meditate his presence to the lonely!

Bain is chairman and professor of the Biblical Division at Blue Mountain College.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Prayer of repentance

Psalm 51:1-17

By Ken Hester

Johnny practiced his slingshot without much success. On his way back to his grandmother's house, he spied her pet duck, took aim, and gave it a killing blow. Desperate, Johnny hid his kill behind the woodpile, only to see his sister watching. Sally said nothing at the time, but later used the secret as blackmail to get out of doing chores.

After several days of doing both his chores and his sisters, Johnny finally confessed to his grandmother. She replied, "I was standing at the window and saw the whole thing. I wondered how long you would let your sister make a slave of you. Because I love you, I forgive you."

Satan blackmails many from

experiencing intimacy with God by reminding us of past sins.

This psalm is the sinner's guide to a right relationship with God. King David had just been confronted about his misconduct with Bathsheba when he penned this song of repentance.

David faced a decision after his confrontation with the prophet Nathan: run from God, or run toward God. We are fortunate that this sinner, this king, this soldier, this poet, paved the way to God for the rest of us who have fallen short. David invites us into his repentant conversation with God. The sinner makes three request of his Savior.

Pray for reconciliation. This reconciliation begins with the



Hester

realization of God's character (51:1). David's only defense is the character of the Judge. The judge is merciful, liberal in his dispositions to kindness, and tender to the point of being heartbroken. Reconciliation, however, also needs the realization of the sinner's character (51:2).

In the first two verses, David uses three words to describe his wrongdoing: transgression, iniquity, and sin. "Sin" means to wander off the path of righteousness. "Iniquity" is to willfully act in a wrongful way. "Transgression" is the deliberate act of defiance against God.

The next step in reconciliation is for the sinner to realize who is to blame for the difference in the characters (51:3-5). David owned up to his sins without excuse or casting blame. Although his sin affected his family, the nation, Bathsheba, and her husband, David knew the real victim was

God. So in verse five he completes his confession by speaking of himself as one who has been sinful from birth. Reconciliation should lead into restoration.

Pray for restoration. Restoration begins with an honest look at the problem (51:6). C. S. Lewis once wrote, "The true Christian's nostril is to be continually attentive to the inner cesspool." This honesty leads the believer to dependence on the only one who can fix the problem. God cleanses us from sin (51:7). God heals us from the character of sinfulness (51:8). God removes the guilt of sin (51:9). God creates in us steadfastness (51:10). God keeps us near him (51:11). God restores the joy of our salvation (51:12). Once restoration is complete, resuscitation is expressed.

Pray for resuscitation. David now anticipates life on the other side of sin. He is resolved to teach others not to walk down the path of wickedness (51:13). C. H. Spurgeon wrote, "Reclaimed

poachers make the best gamekeepers." He intends to sing about God's righteousness (51:14-15). One would guess David would sing of God's mercy instead. David, however, knows that God does not lower his standards for people, but raises people to his standards.

David understood that for him to experience this resuscitated life, he must maintain a passive posture with God (51:16-17). No sacrifices were appointed by the Law of Moses to nullify the guilt of murder and adultery. Those crimes were punishable by death. All David had to offer was "contrite" heart. The word contrite denotes being bruised and broken into pieces.

God recognized David's brokenness and forgave him. God's forgiveness does not remove the consequences of sin, just the guilt. One can bear almost any consequence as long as God is close.

Hester is pastor of Mantee Church, Mantee.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

True life

John 12:23-28, 30-37, 42-43

By Beth W. Cape

"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." (Jn. 12:24, 25 NIV)

She trusted the Lord and was baptized in the spring of 1966. In primary Sunday School she told her teacher that when she grew up, she wanted to serve the Lord by playing the piano in church. As a teenager she felt a strong call into ministry. She had been to GAs for years and felt that it

must be a call to missions. In those days a call to missions was about the only call a woman could hear.

After a while, sounds of the world got stronger till the sound of the call was drowned out. The most important thing in her life began to be "love." To fall in love, get married, and have children became the focus of her life.

She finished college and waited for romance to fall in place. As a teacher and church pianist, she had a good life. She loved the Lord, but the part of her heart where romance lived couldn't be given to him. He might make her



Cape

marry a preacher or worse yet...he might not even want her to get married!

The years went by: twenty-four, twenty-five, twenty-six. Oh how she longed to be married. A new car, her own house, boyfriends — none gave satisfaction. God wanted all her heart.

At an International Mission Board commissioning service she again acknowledged her call to ministry that had never gone away. This time the walk down the aisle was much harder for it was a walk down the road to death, the road of giving up control — dying to her plans and accepting his plans, no matter what they were.

A young journeyman couple moved to her church's missionary apartment and inspired her. The thought of being a journeyman was scary one — two years

away from home, two years in a strange place, two years out of the marriage market — didn't God know how old she was?

"For I know the plans that I have for you," a young revival preacher read. "Plans for your welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope... you will seek me and you will find me when you search for me with all your heart."

Those words touched her heart. She accepted God's plan which led her to be a journeyman — two years of learning; wonderful years but at the same time, terrible years. She learned to depend on God — not always because she wanted to, but often because there was no other choice.

Her favorite song said "Love is choosing; Love is losing; Love is finding when you give it all away" by Tim Shepherd. She came home ready for what God had in store for her and then... she lived happily ever after.

Many of us can testify that when we give something to God, he returns it "exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think."

What about the end of the story? At the perfect age of 30, I married God's perfect man for me and we had three perfect children (there may be too many "perfects" in there, but you get the idea).

It is a daily struggle to give God all our hearts; to continually place ourselves on the altar of sacrifice. As the saying goes "the only trouble with living sacrifices is that they keep jumping off the altar." God calls us, but the world is louder and can drown out his call.

What is God calling you to do? Can you hear the call? If not, the problem is not that he does not speak, but that we do not listen.

Cape is director of children and family ministry at First Church, Picayune.

Pastor shares Jesus at war-like Colo. scene

LITTLETON, Colo. (BP) — Denver-area pastor E. Michael "Butch" Caner has never seen the horrors of war, "but I assume it would have been something like this."

Caner, pastor of Central Church in Aurora, was among several ministers brought to Columbine High School in Littleton as the nation's worst-ever school shooting unfolded April 20, taking 15 lives, including the two weapons- and bomb-wielding youth clad in black trenchcoats.

Asked by a patrolman friend to the

school grounds, Caner recounted, "It was a gruesome scene. ... Blood was everywhere, students were being carted off on gurneys and stretchers, parents were weeping."

"Some people kept asking, 'Why, God, why?' It was specifically to these families we ministered most. They needed someone to assure them that God is not the author of sin and that he wanted to bring them peace."

"We had amazing opportunities to share Christ," Caner said of his ministry at the

scene, which extended to 9:30 that night. "With the media swarming and secular counselors giving no hope, we really had the chance to share Jesus."

"It was ministry on the front lines, which is exactly where the church should be."

Rob Norris, director of missions for the Denver Association of Southern Baptist Churches and interim pastor of Littleton's Ken Caryl Church — located less than two miles from Columbine High — said 13 Columbine students are members of the congregation.

All of the church's youth were safe but surely traumatized, Norris said. One girl was in the cafeteria when shooting erupted; another of Ken Caryl's students was barricaded in a room with eight students and two teachers for several hours.

Deacons of the church visited each of the families the night of April 20, as did the church's bivocational youth minister, Steve Lee.

"The tragedy surely will yield opportunities to point people to

faith, especially those asking, "Why?" Norris said.

"Although we may never be able to understand why, we do have some answers," he said, "and those answers are in Jesus Christ — and that's a vital message to get out to people."

Nick Lillo, pastor of Centennial Community Church, a congregation located about four miles from Columbine High School, said the church staff gathered to pray after learning about the unfolding crisis "and then we sent a number of them, mostly those involved in our youth ministry, to Leewood Elementary School. That's where authorities were sending kids from the school and where parents were told to go."

On April 21, Lillo said the church staff was setting up counseling appointments for kids and families. A 7 p.m. prayer service also is scheduled. No members of the church were among the slain or wounded.

"We think we have everyone accounted for," he said. The church is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Conservative Baptist Association.

Lillo said as the days go on his church's efforts to help the community cope with the tragedy will be twofold. "First, we are concerned with how we can help those people in our church who have been traumatized by this, not just physically, but emotionally. Second, we want to serve the community — as a whole — as best we can. There are a lot of people in our community who have no spiritual connection ... no spiritual dimension to their lives."

"I think it is a huge challenge for our church as we attempt to reach a culture that is moving away from moral absolutes," Lillo said.

"We're experiencing the consequences of that," he added.

Toy Day at Neshoba Baptist Center



Toy Day at the Neshoba Baptist Center provided over 1,100 toys and 500 fruit/candy bags for children. The gifts were provided by the churches of the association, local schools, clubs, businesses, and individuals. Charlotte Bishop, director, associational missions development program, and Mike Smith, director of missions, coordinated the ministry. (BR special photo)

Ross: alienated youth can still be turned to faith

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Alienated youth like those in the "Trenchcoat Mafia" at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., can be reached for Christ, said Richard Ross, a youth ministry specialist at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention and a prime mover behind the True Love Waits youth abstinence program.

"High school students today value relationships above everything," Ross said. "The hurting ones may initially ignore our buildings, ceremonies, and doctrine, but most will respond to someone who genuinely cares."

"When they experience the warmth of relationship with other Christian students, a youth leader or even a senior adult, they are much more likely to understand God's offer of the ultimate relationship. In that relationship, damaged and even destructive hearts can be transformed."

Ross added, "Too many Baptist churches are happy to see a new student visiting, as long as he is white, wears Tommy Hilfiger and was once state Bible drill champion. They are less than thrilled when the new ones smoke on the parking lot, have fishing tackle in their faces, and clap loudly when they like something in worship."

"Almost weekly I am with youth ministers who know how to reach those students, but they get their hands slapped by leaders when they do so," Ross said.

"A church youth group must provide a uniquely Christian subculture and we must not allow new students to wreck that. We need more parents and other adults to volunteer to provide gentle but firm structure around all students."

"With that structure in place, we need to aggressively seek out and bring in students who have been damaged by life."

"If we don't, we can expect tragedies among students to continue," Ross said.

LifeWay Christian Resources published a book last year dealing with violence in American schools.

In the 1998 Broadman & Holman book, "Kids Who Kill: Confronting Our Culture of Violence," Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee explored the crises of youth violence pervading the country.

The book sketches out in broad terms the state

of juvenile violence in America and examines the contributing factors of the nation's cultural demoralization.

LifeWay offers other small-

group youth studies that address violence, and a number of other resources.

The resources can be ordered by calling 1-800-458-2772.

Expert: Gothic appeal no surprise

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Bill Gordon was not surprised to learn the "Trenchcoat Mafia" involved in the school massacre in suburban Denver April 20 were not only obsessed with Nazism but also apparently devotees of the rock group Marilyn Manson and the related "Gothic" subculture.

"A lot of the teenagers that have been going on these killing rampages have been involved in some form of the occult or self-styled Satanism. Groups like Marilyn Manson glorify Satan," said Gordon, an interfaith evangelism associate with the North American Mission Board whose responsibilities include helping Southern Baptists reach those involved in the occult.

"They're listening to music that glorifies violence and glorifies death," Gordon said. "It's basically a case of nihilism, and the ultimate act in nihilism is to kill." Gordon said teens who find themselves rejected by the more dominant culture often are driven to a form of self-styled Satanism and have a preoccupation with death. Involvement in the occult by outcasts has actually been going on for at least 20 years, he said, with the Marilyn Manson/Gothic culture being just the recent variation.

"Many of them feel powerless in their day-to-day life, and they turn to the occult because they view it as a source of power, as something that will empower them ... but it never does," he said. "It just leads to situations like we saw yesterday. Of course this was a worst-case scenario."

The most obvious way of helping teens headed in this direction, Gordon said, is simply for Christian peers to befriend them — preferably before they have developed the intense hatred that isolates them further.

"Most of these guys turn to this subculture because they feel like they have no friends anywhere else," he said, noting that many are desperately hungry for the hope found in Jesus Christ.

"Share with them a biblical warning about the dangers of being involved in the occult," Gordon said. "Share with them that Jesus loves them and wants to have a personal relationship with them."

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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XPHM GDQT VHFG
FMXL PQJ, RFX FR
DEDQM XPB GNLCT
QMXL PQG RKDUH: ILC
DKK XPHB XPDX XDWH
XPH GNLCT GPDKK RHC-
QGP NQXP XPH GNLCT.
JDXXPHN XNHMXB-GQO:
IQXB-XNL

Clue: N = W

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark Twelve: Forty.